

**In the Claims**

1. An apparatus for intended use in the course of shipping a vehicle, such as a motorcycle having at least two rotatable wheels for engaging the ground, comprising:

5 a base supporting the vehicle above the ground, said base including opposed first and second sides; and  
at least one guard supported by said base for movement from a retracted position adjacent the first side of the base to an extended upstanding position in which the guard is away from the base,  
10 whereby the upstanding guard assists in protecting the vehicle from being damaged during shipping.

2. The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising a plurality of retractable supports for supporting said base above the ground during movement.

3. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the base is a generally rectangular frame; and

wherein said opposed first and second sides are elongated defining a longitudinal direction, and third and fourth sides define a transverse direction.

4. The apparatus of claim 3, further including a plurality of support assemblies mounted to the frame for movement to an actuated position in which the assemblies support the frame above the ground.

5. The apparatus of claim 4, wherein each support assembly includes a rotatably mounted wheel supported by a hinge plate secured to the frame for pivoting movement about an axis aligned with the transverse direction.

6. The apparatus of claim 5, further including a stop associated with each wheel assembly, the stop having a first, inactive position for allowing the corresponding support assembly to retract and a second, active position for maintaining each support assembly in the actuated position .

7. The apparatus of claim 6, wherein the frame includes two pairs of cross members aligned with the transverse direction, each pair defining a space capable of receiving at least a portion of each vehicle wheel so as to prevent movement in the longitudinal direction.

8. The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the frame includes a pair of connectors extending between each pair of cross members, wherein each support assembly is mounted to one of the pair of connectors and a corresponding elongated side of the frame for pivoting movement between the cross members.

9. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the guard is attached to an arm mounted to the first side of said base for pivoting movement in a common plane with the base.

10. The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the guard is removably secured to an open-ended receiver supported by the arm, the receiver including aligned slots for receiving a first pin associated with the guard and a pair of aligned apertures for receiving a second pin extending through a pair of aligned, J-shaped slots formed in the guard, whereby the second pin negotiates through the J-shaped slots when the guard is raised and then lowered to the collapsed position.

11. The apparatus of claim 1 in combination with a removable trough at least partially supporting the vehicle in an upright position.

12. The apparatus of claim 1 in combination with the vehicle.

13. An apparatus for intended use in shipping a vehicle having wheels for engaging the ground, comprising:

a base adapted for receiving and supporting the vehicle above the ground, said base including first and second opposed sides;

5 an upstanding guard associated with each side of the base, said guard protecting the vehicle when positioned on the base; and

a plurality of support assemblies, each including a rotatable wheel and being mounted to the base for pivoting movement between a retracted position and an actuated position in which the wheel helps to support the base above the ground,

10

whereby the base may rest on the ground when the support assemblies are in the retracted position and the wheels facilitate moving the apparatus, including with the vehicle, when the assemblies are in the actuated position.

14. The apparatus of claim 13, wherein each support assembly includes a transverse axle rotatably supporting the wheel, the axle being supported by a hinge plate secured to the base for pivoting movement.

15. The apparatus of claim 13, further including a stop associated with each support assembly, the stop having a first inactive position for allowing the corresponding support assembly to retract and a second active position for maintaining each support assembly in the actuated position.

16. The apparatus according to claim 13, wherein the base comprises a generally rectangular frame.

17. The apparatus according to claim 16, wherein each guard is an upstanding post mounted for pivoting movement from a first retracted position adjacent the frame to a second, extended position farther away from the frame.

18. The apparatus of claim 16, wherein the post is mounted for pivoting movement between the upstanding position for guarding the vehicle and a collapsed position.

19. The apparatus of claim 18, wherein the post is supported by an arm mounted to a corresponding side of the frame for pivoting movement.

20. The apparatus of claim 19, wherein the post is removably secured to a receiver supported by the arm, the receiver including aligned slots for receiving a first pin associated with the post and a pair of aligned apertures for receiving a second pin extending through a pair of aligned, J-shaped slots formed in the post, whereby the second pin is captured in and negotiates the J-shaped slots as the post moves to the collapsed position.

21. An apparatus for intended use in the course of shipping a vehicle, such as a motorcycle having rotatable wheels for engaging the ground, comprising:

- 5 a generally rectangular frame adapted for receiving and supporting the vehicle above the ground;
- means for protecting the vehicle against damage when positioned on the frame; and
- selectively actuated means for both supporting the frame above the ground when actuated and facilitating movement of the frame  
10 over the ground with low-friction, rolling contact.

22. The apparatus according to claim 21, wherein the protecting means comprises at least one protective assembly positioned along each side of the frame and including a generally upstanding guard, each protective assembly mounted for pivoting movement from a first, retracted  
5 position such that the upstanding guard is adjacent the corresponding side of the frame to a second, extended position in which the upstanding guard is away from the frame.

23. The apparatus according to claim 22, wherein each guard is a post selectively movable between an upstanding position and a collapsed position.

24. The apparatus according to claim 21, wherein the movement facilitating means comprises a plurality of support assemblies, each including a rotatable wheel and being mounted to the frame for pivoting movement between a retracted position and an actuated position in which  
5 the wheel helps to support the frame above the ground.

25. A method of loading at least one motorcycle into a shipping container using a base including a plurality of selectively actuated wheels, comprising:  
placing the motorcycle on the base;  
5 actuating the wheels; and  
wheeling the base including the motorcycle into the shipping container.

26. The method of claim 25, further comprising the step of retracting the wheels after the wheeling step.

27. The method of claim 25, further including securing the base to the shipping container so as to prevent relative up and down movement.

28. A method of protecting a motorcycle when associated with a rack and loaded into a shipping container, such as a trailer, comprising:  
pivotally mounting a protective assembly including an  
upstanding post along at least two different sides of the rack; and

5                    pivoting the protective assembly with the upstanding post from a first, retracted position closer to the side of the rack to a second, extended position farther away from the rack.

29.    The method of claim 28, further comprising the step of collapsing the upstanding post, including when the protective assembly is in the retracted position.

30.    A method of retrofitting an existing shipping rack for a motorcycle, comprising:

                         pivoting a protective assembly including an upstanding post along at least two different sides of the rack; and

5                    pivoting a plurality of selectively actuated support assemblies to the rack, each including a rotatably mounted wheel,

                         whereby the upstanding posts protect the motorcycle against damage and the wheels may engage the ground to provide low-friction, rolling contact to facilitate moving the rack and the motorcycle together.

31.    The method of claim 30, wherein the selective actuation includes pivoting the support assembly from a first, retracted position to a second, extended position.